



Committee on Student Fees and Budget Review

UNIT REPORT: RECREATIONAL SPORTS

Adam King, Budget Analyst
Dan Flood, Coordinator

Unit Contacts

Mike Weinberg
Director, Recreational Sports

Introduction to the Unit

Recreational Sports (RecSports) provides facilities and instruction in both group and individual exercise and administers the club and intramural sports programs. UC Berkeley students, faculty, and even members of the Berkeley community use RecSports' exercise services.

RecSports currently receives two campus-based fees from past student referendums: one, a referendum of \$28.50 per student was passed in 1981 to primarily to pay for the mortgage of the RSF building, and another in 2006 adding an additional \$5 per student to help finance its daily operations. These two fees crucially support RecSports as the Unit does not receive State funding, and must continually repay the University for previous debt incurred for capital projects.

RecSports pays the University \$244,000 annually in debt repayment, and has done so successfully for the past 8 consecutive years. However, the Unit is concerned about upcoming playlists in the next few years. Although its mortgage payments for the RSF are nearly complete, the Unit is now facing payments on loans incurred to build the California Memorial Stadium Gymnasium (CMS).

Unit Director Meeting Findings

On November 6, 2014, Adam King and Dan Flood of CSF met with the director of RecSports, Mike Weinberg, and RecSports' financial analyst, Loretta Ezeife. The conversation focused on the new upcoming student referendum, as well as the financial history of RecSports, and its long-term strategic initiatives.

Mr. Weinberg primarily focused on the student referendum that students will vote on in the Spring 2015 semester. Mr. Weinberg emphasized the importance of this referendum to the survival of RecSports. The proposed referendum will renew increase the fee to \$68 – funds that are vital to maintaining the RecSports' operations and to completing future payments of the CMS Gymnasium. Additionally, this new referendum will allow RecSports to develop new wellness programs. Over 50% of the funds raised from the increased fee will be put towards Mental Health services in the Tang Center.

Currently, RecSports is planning on paying its first loan payments on the CMS Gymnasium with small reserves kept for RSF major maintenance. However, Mr. Weinberg emphasized the importance of the referendum passing in order to ensure RecSports' ability to complete long-term payments.

Mr. Weinberg and the CSF representatives discussed the possibility of receiving private-funding from corporate sponsorship of the creation of a new gym or internal renovation improvements in the current RSF. One proposed idea was a Private Public Partnership (P3), in which a private company builds a structure and owns the building and land rights for an allotted period of time. The new Vice-Chancellor of Real Estate is reportedly more in favor of P3s. However, the process would still be very difficult due to complex campus policies and largely delayed revenues from such a project.

RecSports currently receives \$617,000 in Student Services fee funding, which is slightly less than 6% of their total budget of \$11 million. Mr. Weinberg emphasized that this funding has been gradually decreasing, and has been as high as \$1.5 million in the past. If more funding was allocated, RecSports would try and renew the cardio machines in the RSF. Mr. Weinberg hopes to create a reservation system for the cardio machines, so that users could check availability beforehand, and reserve a spot at a machine at a specific time in order to reduce queue times. Additional funding could assist in the creation of real time usage data, so users would know how crowded the gym is at any certain time. Lastly, more funding would allow RecSports to convert unused storage space in the Southwest weight room into additional gym space.

Compliance with Guidelines

The SSF guidelines indicate that the student services fee is intended for use for, but not limited to: services related to psychological health and well-being of students, social and recreational programs, services related to campus life and community, and career support.

RecSports is in compliance with SSF guidelines. The Unit provide a service that “directly benefits students” while not serving “a core instructional purpose”. Exercise promotes “physical and psychological health and well-being”, and the programs offered by RecSports provide a forum for “social, recreational” activities. The new referendum fee contains a return to aid, ensuring it is in compliance with the new SSF guidelines.

Preliminary Recommendations

CSF recommends that RecSports receives an increased allocation from the Student Services Fee. RecSports serves tens of thousands of students every year, and its services promote physical health, which is fundamental to a student's experience at the University. Additionally, countless surveys have showed that regular exercise is just as effective at improving mental health as traditional mental health services.

While the campus does provide RecSports with funding, the funding received is less than 50% of the funding provided to Intercollegiate Athletics despite the disparity between the sizes of their respective target populations – 900 students for Intercollegiate Athletics, and a large majority of the

campus population for RecSports.

If the available facility space at RecSports was divided among the students that use its services, each student would have on average about 2 square feet, which pales in comparison to most other Division-I schools that have about 9. Increased funding to RecSports would assist in expanding the available programs, services, and facilities available and would directly help improve the physical health of UC Berkeley students.